



# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development  
Office of Economic Advisors

April 2004

FOR MILWAUKEE/WOW COUNTIES  
MILWAUKEE, WASHINGTON, OZAUKEE AND WAUKESHA COUNTIES

## Metro Area Unemployment Rates Lower in March

**Milwaukee County's** unemployment rate dropped two-tenths of a percentage point to 6.9 percent in March. The annual comparison to March 2003 shows the current rate is six-tenths of a point lower representing over 7,000 more employed residents and almost 2,800 fewer unemployed.

**Washington County's** unem-

ployment rate dropped one-half of a point to 5.5 percent in March. Washington shows the largest annual decrease in unemployment rate of the four-county metro area, lower by a full percent point compared to March 2003.

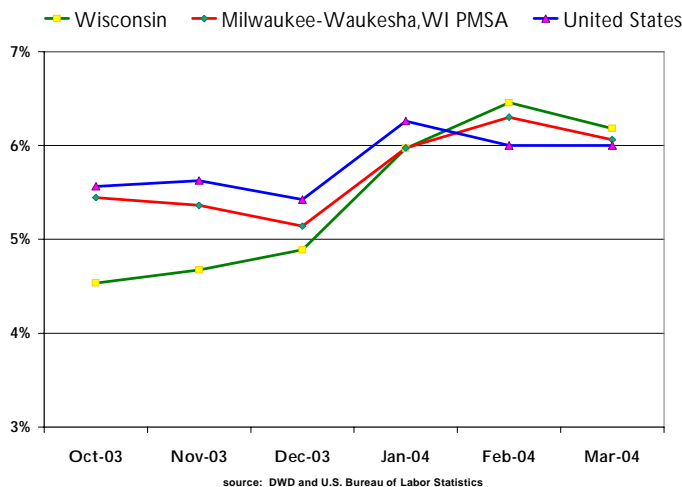
**Ozaukee County's** labor force figures showed the more subtle of changes within the

metro area. Its March unemployment rate, 4.6 percent, is two-tenths of a percent point lower than the previous month and is one-tenth of a point lower than March 2003. Ozaukee County has not been showing the same dramatic levels of change in 2004 like many Wisconsin counties have. This is due to the fact that the county's labor force has maintained relatively stable employment. Ozaukee usually contains one of the state's lowest unemployment rates on a consistent basis.

**Waukesha County's** unemployment rate was 4.7 percent in March. This represents a monthly and annual decrease of three-tenths and five-tenths of a percentage point, respectively. Waukesha County had the state's third lowest unemployment rate in March.

The **Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA** unemployment rate in March was 6.1 percent (not seasonally adjusted). This is a de-

Six-Month Unemployment Rate Watch



## Civilian Labor Force Estimates for Southeast Wisconsin counties: March 2004

	Wisconsin			Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA			Milwaukee County		
	Mar-04	Feb-04	Mar-03	Mar-04	Feb-04	Mar-03	Mar-04	Feb-04	Mar-03
Labor force	3,092,847	3,099,664	3,046,810	826,304	828,219	818,598	487,855	488,846	483,615
Employed	2,901,690	2,899,533	2,837,015	776,209	776,039	764,221	454,313	454,213	447,296
Unemployed	191,157	200,131	209,795	50,095	52,180	54,377	33,542	34,633	36,319
% Unemployed	6.2%	6.5%	6.9%	6.1%	6.3%	6.6%	6.9%	7.1%	7.5%
	Washington County			Ozaukee County			Waukesha County		
	Mar-04	Feb-04	Mar-03	Mar-04	Feb-04	Mar-03	Mar-04	Feb-04	Mar-03
Labor force	70,571	70,888	70,239	49,194	49,261	48,454	218,686	219,223	216,290
Employed	66,685	66,670	65,655	46,909	46,898	46,184	208,303	208,257	205,086
Unemployed	3,886	4,218	4,584	2,285	2,363	2,270	10,383	10,966	11,204
% Unemployed	5.5%	6.0%	6.5%	4.6%	4.8%	4.7%	4.7%	5.0%	5.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and DWD, Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Figures are not seasonally adjusted and current month's data are preliminary

## Industry Employment Estimates for the Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA: March 2004

Place of Work Employment in 1,000's	Wisconsin			Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA		
	Mar-04	Diff. since Feb-2004	Diff. since Mar-2003	Mar-04	Diff. since Feb-2004	Diff. since Mar-2003
All Industries	2,761.4	13.4	34.8	823.2	1.4	-1.7
Construction/Natural Resources	117.6	4.8	7.8	28.6	0.9	-1.2
Manufacturing	499.5	-1.6	-4.7	133.5	-0.8	-4.6
Retail Trade	315.1	1.5	7.9	79.5	-0.1	-1.0
Wholesale Trade	114.9	1.6	3.6	40.7	0.7	0.7
Transport/Warehouse/Utilities	104.7	0.1	1.4	30.3	0.3	0.2
Financial Activities	158.8	-0.7	3.8	61.7	-0.5	3.7
Education and Health Services	375.5	0.7	13.6	133.2	-0.7	5.1
Leisure and Hospitality	235.1	2.4	8.5	62.7	0.6	1.4
Info./Prof./Bus.and Other Services	420.8	2.2	-0.3	159.4	0.8	-2.8
Information	48.9	-0.3	-1.2	19.4	-0.1	0.8
Professional and Business Services	242.8	0.8	4.5	100.0	0.2	-2.5
Other Services	129.1	1.7	-3.6	40.0	0.7	-1.1
Fed/State/Local Government	419.4	2.4	-6.8	93.6	0.2	-3.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and DWD, Current Employment Statistics. Figures are rounded and may not sum to total. Current month's figures are preliminary

crease of two-tenths of a point over the month and is six-tenths of a point lower compared to March 2003. Labor force dynamics show close to 12,000 more employed residents and almost 4,300 fewer unemployed compared to March 2003, marking the second straight year to show positive employment numbers compared to the previous March.

The monthly tally of jobs on business' payrolls in the metro area numbered 823,200 jobs in March. The total represents an overall increase of 1,400 jobs over the month. Construction employment showed the largest sector increase with 900 more jobs. Wholesale trade also showed a very large monthly gain of 700 jobs and its employment levels are now running ahead of March 2003 levels. Wholesale trade has been slowly recovering in employment over the past six months or so. While it has not recovered to the employment level it enjoyed as recently as 2001, it is showing consistent signals that it is getting healthier. Other strong, monthly gains in employment were seen in leisure and hospitality em-

ployment (+600 jobs) and other services (+700 jobs). The sector, other services, includes industries that relate to personal care services, membership organizations, and repair and maintenance businesses.

The annual perspective of the payroll survey shows a net loss of jobs. The net loss stood at 1,700 jobs in March. This is the lowest annual deficit the metro area has shown since an annual gain of jobs was posted in March 2001.

Financial activities and education and health services added 3,700 (+6.4%) and 5,100 jobs (+4.0%), respectively, compared to last year. Other sectors showing job growth annually besides the aforementioned wholesale trade are leisure and hospitality, information, and transportation, warehousing and utilities.

Manufacturing employment shows the largest industry employment decrease at -4,600 jobs over the year. Other industries employing fewer than they were a year ago are construction; retail trade; professional, business and other services; and government.

It is likely that April industry employment will be robust. On average, the change from March to April is the second highest in the year in terms of additional jobs.

The 11th annual Governor's Workforce Development Conference is scheduled for May 19-21, 2004 in Milwaukee. The theme, Grow Wisconsin: An Economic Imperative, centers on Governor Doyle's "Grow Wisconsin" plan. The information, resources and strategies developed through networking and problem-solving during the conference will equip state staff and business leaders with ideas on how to promote and develop Wisconsin's workforce. For more information and to register on-line go to [www.gwdc.net](http://www.gwdc.net).

Direct questions and comments to:

**Eric Grosso, State Labor Economist**

201 East Washington Avenue

Room A400

Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Phone: 608.266.7034

e-mail: [eric.grosso@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:eric.grosso@dwd.state.wi.us)

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